



HHBC LABORATORY SERVICES

SURGICAL PATHOLOGY REPORT

ACCESSION NUMBER: CG-17-0007

SPECIMEN TYPE: Partial chapter dissection, John 5:16-47

CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS: Claims of Jesus

GROSS DESCRIPTION:

What's the big picture here:

Jesus goes to the pool of Bethesda on the Sabbath. He heals a man crippled for 38 years, in front of the Jewish leaders. Then Jesus disappears. Later while in the temple, Jesus is confronted by the Jews after being identified by the man who was healed.

Jesus doesn't make mistakes. Did he choose this man to heal, who didn't know who Jesus was and didn't thank him for the healing, just to initiate the discussion that took place at the temple with the Jews?

We have the advantage of knowing the whole story of who Jesus was and what He did, but what was going through the minds of the Jews at that moment in time?

The Jews had a background of thoughts and ideas, of theology and religion which is very far from our own. They had in their minds an understanding of the scriptures, of what the promised Messiah was to be and what the Messiah was to do. In these verses, Jesus is making claims that challenge what they knew and believed.

The rest of the chapter is Jesus addressing the Jews, and using the Jewish mindset/arguments to claim who He was, where He was coming from, and what He was there to do.

16 And this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath. 17 But Jesus answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I am working." 18 This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

MICROSCOPIC DESCRIPTION: Jesus' claims and response to Jews

A. Jesus claims to be God's Son

Jesus clearly states that God is “My Father”. Jesus answers the Jews, claiming that He was equal with God. He makes three points about his relationship with God.

- 1) His **identity** with God the Father. If we wish to see how God feels toward men, if we wish to see how God reacts to sin, if we wish to see how God regards the human situation, then we must look at Jesus. The mind, words and actions of Jesus are the mind, words and actions of God.
- 2) Jesus was in **complete obedience** to the Father. Jesus never did anything on his own, but always what the Father wanted him to do. **19 So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise.**
- 3) This obedience is based on **love**. The unity between Jesus and God is a unity of love. **20 For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing. And greater works than these will he show him, so that you may marvel.**

B. As the Son of God, Jesus claims the powers of God

- 1) The right over life and death/ the giver of life. **21 For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will.** This has a double meaning. Both life here on earth and life eternal. We are made fully alive when Christ enters our lives. Commentator William Barclay states, “When we make the discovery of the realm of music or of literature or of art or of travel, we sometimes speak of a new world opening out to us. That man into whose life Jesus Christ has entered finds life made new. He himself is changed; his personal relationships are changed; his conception of work and duty and pleasure is changed; his relationship to God is changed.”
- 2) The right to Judge **22 For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son,** John says that the Father committed the whole process of judgement to Jesus Christ. A man’s judgement depends on his reaction to Jesus. If one accepts Christ, he is on the way to life. If one sees Jesus as an enemy, he has condemned himself.
- 3) The right to be Honored. **23 that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him.**

C. With the powers of God, Jesus claims to give eternal life, free of judgement

- 1) **24 Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life. 25 “Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. 26 For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself.** These are similar claims as in the verses before, but this time with the call of action on our part. We must hear and believe, and be made alive where once we were spiritually dead. When we listen and believe, life in this world becomes new and thrilling; in the world to come, eternal life with God becomes a certainty.
- 2) **27 And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. 28 Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his**

voice 29 and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment. 30 "I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me.

Again, similar claims but with something new, Jesus uses the title of Son of Man instead of Son of God. Judgement will be made by one who really knows mankind. One who is all God and all man, understanding all circumstances.

D. Jesus supported/defended his claims in a way that would be understood by the Jews of that time. He presented multiple witnesses about who he was.

- 1) Our Lord knew what His opponents were thinking and so in John 5:31, at the outset of His testimony, He informed them that He knew they would not accept His testimony alone. The Old Testament law required two or three witnesses (see Deuteronomy 17:6; 19:15) for a man to be found guilty of an offense. Jesus had much more testimony than this, but it didn't matter since the Jewish authorities were determined not to accept it.

31 If I alone bear witness about myself, my testimony is not true. 32 There is another who bears witness about me, and I know that the testimony that he bears about me is true.

Most commentators believe the "another" is God the Father, but the Jews would not accept that claim. Jesus then provided John the Baptist, and the witness of those who saw the miracles that he (Jesus) was doing.

33 You sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth. 34 Not that the testimony that I receive is from man, but I say these things so that you may be saved. 35 He was a burning and shining lamp, and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light. 36 But the testimony that I have is greater than that of John. For the works that the Father has given me to accomplish, the very works that I am doing, bear witness about me that the Father has sent me.

Lastly, He states more clearly that the "another" is the Father who has already testified/witnessed whom Jesus was in the Scriptures.

37 And the Father who sent me has himself borne witness about me. His voice you have never heard, his form you have never seen, 38 and you do not have his word abiding in you, for you do not believe the one whom he has sent. 39 You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me.

The Jews searched the Scriptures and yet failed to recognize Christ when he came. Even today some of the best Bible students in the world read scriptures and yet reject Jesus. How can that happen? They read the word in the wrong way. They read it with a closed mind. They do not really love God; they love their own ideas about him. The Jews did not learn a theology from scripture; they used scripture to defend a theology which they themselves created. There is still a danger that we could use the Bible to prove our beliefs and not to test them.

2) Jesus wanted his motives to be clear

40 yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life. 41 I do not receive glory from people. 42 But I know that you do not have the love of God within you. 43 I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me. If another comes in his own name, you will receive him. 44 How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?

He was not looking for the official Jewish endorsement. He was not looking to win an argument or debate. He was endorsed by the Father and was looking to offer the Jews life.

3) Jesus claims not to be their accuser

45 Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you: Moses, on whom you have set your hope. 46 For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me. 47 But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?"

Jesus told about Moses which would have certainly gotten the Jews attention. The Pharisees prided themselves on being the true followers of their ancestor Moses. They were trying to follow every one of his laws to the letter, and even added some of their own. To them, the Law was their source of righteousness even though they could never fulfill the Law. They thought salvation would come by their good deeds in keeping the law. With all their devotion to scripture they did not really believe what it said. They missed the essential point. Moses would condemn them because they had broken the covenant he instituted, and missed the Person he wrote about. If the Jews really believed Moses they would believe Christ, for Moses wrote about Him and His coming. Since Moses' words were rejected, so were Jesus' words.

Witnesses to the fact that Jesus is the Son of God are many, and they are compelling. Men do not reject the claims of Christ for lack of evidence. They reject Him because sinful men do not wish to submit to Him as God, nor do they wish to come to Him as unworthy sinners seeking grace. This is the reason the Jews rejected Jesus. It is why the Gentiles rejected Him as well.

FINAL DIAGNOSIS:

- JESUS CLAIMS TO BE THE SON OF GOD.**
- JESUS CLAIMS TO JUDGE AND OFFER ETERNAL LIFE.**
- JESUS CLAIMS HE IS FOUND IN THE SCRIPTURES.**
- PLEASE SEE COMMENT.**

DIAGNOSTIC COMMENTS:

For Jesus to speak like this was an act of the most extraordinary and unique courage. He must have known well that to make claims like this would sound like the ultimate blasphemy to the orthodox Jewish leaders and was a sentence to death. The man who listened to words like this had only two options, either to accept Jesus as the Son of God or hate him as a blasphemer.

The Jewish authorities rejected Jesus. They not only rejected His testimony concerning Himself, they set aside the testimony of John the Baptist, of Jesus' works, of the Father, and of the Scriptures. Knowledge had been given to the Jews and they failed to use it, thus they were condemned.

Jesus not only claims to be the Messiah, the Son of God, He claims to be the only source of eternal life. He says that to reject Him is to reject life, to reject the Father, and to seal one's eternal condemnation. It is not enough to revere the Word of God, or even to diligently read and study it. The Jewish authorities did all this, yet they missed the main point of the Scriptures—the promise of a Messiah exactly like Jesus.

The Word of God must abide in our hearts by faith. We must look for Christ in the Scriptures, and having found Him, we should love and obey Him. The Bible is not given so that we may amass knowledge about God. The Bible is given so that we may know, love, and serve God.

The question is not whether Jesus ever claimed to be the Messiah, or whether His opponents understood Him to do so. The question is whether Jesus is right in what He claims. If He is right, then He does speak for God. If He is right, we had better listen well to what He says, and obey Him.

Life Application Bible- NIV

William Barclay, The Gospel of John Volume 1

Walvoord and Zuck, The Bible Knowledge Commentary

Wenham, Motyer, Carson and France, New Bible Commentary

<https://bible.org/seriespage/why-jews-are-against-jesus>

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+5&version=ESV>